

ious education is worse. We are living in a period of transition. There are those who, sick of irrational religion, rush to the other extreme of no religion and say give us education alone. It supplies all of value in religion while it omits the unreasonable. Science, say they, is the truth and philosophy is sufficient to guide us thru this world. Let life be ordered according to the ethics of nature. Such people while unconscious of it are doing what the Deists of the eighteenth century did. They are professing to find in modern science and philosophy a sure and sufficient guide for morals and duty. But when we seek to know what system of ethics nature and science give them we find that they make nature and science give them a system which in its essential elements does not belong to nature, science or philosophy apart from revealed religion. They think that science and philosophy teach ethics and religion, but if they would examine closely they would find that their ethics and religion have come to them in one historic line, namely the Hebrew prophets and Jesus Christ. It is the fashion of many of our university men of today to disclaim religion in the name of science and education. When I was in college an older friend went into Harvard for a year. On his return I asked him about the Harvard divinity school. He said it did not amount to much because they went too deeply for the good of religion. He had the idea that a thorough knowledge of science and philosophy was inimical to religion. He felt sure of the results of science and he had a corresponding disrespect for religion. He was following such men as Spencer, Huxley, Fiske and others who, feeling the incongruity between the religion taught them and their science and feeling the compelling conviction of the truth of their science practically forsook religion. It would do little good to rail at these people. But I daresay the day will come when it will be seen that they have mistaken an *interpretation* of the Christian religion for that religion as it was taught by our great Teacher. Of that "smartish" kind of unbelief which we sometimes meet with in young men and women who have but a smattering of education we need say nothing. It is like children's diseases, the sooner they catch it the sooner over it. It, like they, sometimes leaves deaf ears and other infirmities, but in most cases no evil effects are seen. But this must be said, the institution which provides no help in that critical period is like the mother who would refuse to put to bed the child with the measles and care for it, but force it out in the rain or storm to its accustomed play or work. In these periods when we have our mental growing pains, when the old foundations of faith on which our childish feet have hitherto rested are slipping away from beneath us, leaving only doubt and pain in their place, when we know not whither to turn or what to hold, well is it for us then if we have as our mental mother not some institution that dares

not teach religion, but a Christian institution with Christian teachers who have walked all that way before and have found new and better foundations for their faith and who will be glad to help us readjust the stones of our spiritual temple. There is the supreme reason for Christian schools. Herbert Spencer's First Principles, Data of Ethics, and Principles of Psychology may be very good textbooks on philosophy. Darwin's Origin of Species is a splendid scientific hypothesis to explain the world. Kant's Critique of Pure Reason is a most brilliant piece of philosophy and Shakespeare's Hamlet, Virgil's Aeneid, and Homer's Iliad are literary masterpieces; but they are poor substitutes for a Bible. Miss Cobbe as quoted by Spurgeon, has put the emphasis in the proper place when she says, "What shall it profit a man if he find the origin of species and knows exactly how earth-worms and sundews conduct themselves if all the while he grows blind to the loveliness of nature and is unable to lift his soul to the Divine and eternal as were the primeval apes?" This irreligious education is wrong, based upon a false premise and must give way in God's own, good time to that full view of the question which sees the importance of both religion and education.

A RATIONAL RELIGION

The great needs of this age are two; namely, a rational religion and a religious education for every man and woman. We need a rational, by that I mean a reasonable religion. Because men will trust their best mental processes. They will not believe a religion, tho they may accept it on authority but believe it they can not, which requires that they repudiate all their God-given mental faculties. The story is told that an ardent Salvation Army officer whose religion was almost entirely of the heart was brought to the conviction that he should speak to every one whom he met on the subject of religion, especially to every one he felt "moved by the Spirit" to address. He was riding on a train and in front of him sat a gentleman to whom he felt he must speak concerning salvation. So, leaning over the back of the seat, he asked, "My dear sir, are you a Christian?" The old gentleman answered, "Sir, I am professor in the theological seminary." Our earnest friend replied, "My dear sir, as you value your own soul don't allow that to stand between you and your Lord." Had his head been as well trained as his heart he would have been delivered from such a blunder for more reasons than one. A rational religion must stand the tests of everything else in this age of criticism and practical utility. First, it must be judged by similar standards as are applied to every other sphere of life. We Christians demand, that Buddhism, Christian Science and Mormonism, be put under the white light of intellectual criticism. Can we ask less for our own Christian system? More and more the world is becoming one vast family. Strange religions as well as strange races are becoming next door

neighbors. The Christian intelligence is busy criticising and pointing out the weak points in heathen systems of religion. Think you that heathen intelligence will not joyfully pick at our religion? Our World's Parliament of Religions taught us that some keen heathen minds are on our track. Two things will be necessary to cause the thinking heathens of India and China to give up their time-honored religions for our beloved Christianity. The first thing is its superior morals, and on this score there is not much danger. The second is like unto it, namely, its superior reasonableness. In other words Christianity must show its superiority in satisfying the deepest needs of the soul and of the intellect. And once we get back to the theology and ethics of Christ we have it. The religion of our blessed Master does both. It calls unto the deepest depths of our moral natures and they echo back the call in perfect symphony. It presents itself to our best intellects and causes no balk in them. As a system of thought it is as simple and clear as an axiom. Jesus Christ never made his religion ridiculous. It is a reasonable religion. It satisfied both the conscience and mind of men and with his religion there has been no fault at all thru all the centuries. Men have railed at the creeds of men which theologians have thought were built on the Bible. They have grown bitter over the *interpretations* of Christ's religion. But take them back to the Great Teacher and let them sit down and listen to his religion as he taught it and they still answer in the words of the officers sent to take him "Never man spake like this man." The compelling power of its perfect reasonableness combined with the perfect satisfaction it gives the religious faculty, the conscience, makes it *the* religion of the world. Oh, brothers, sisters, make your religion winsome by its "sweet reasonableness" as well as by its sincerity and goodness.

So, of the literature of the Christian religion. It must stand the same tests as are applied to other writings. The Bible is a divine book, but it was given thru human instrumentality and written according to the same literary laws as control other writings. Those who are afraid to let the Bible be put to any literary test, are without faith in its power. God needs no one to defend and apologize for his book. It will stand the storm. When understood as a reasonable book, subject to the same laws of interpretation as other books, coming to us thru the same exigencies as other ancient literature, its enemies need not frighten us by anything they may say about the mistakes of Moses or errors in chronology or the conflict between Geology and Genesis. Let us be reasonable with our Bible. Let us not make any foolish claims for it which God never intended should be made and which if foolishly made give God's enemies distinct advantages. Let us face the facts. The Bible is not a textbook on astronomy or geology or ethnology. It was never intended to be such. But it is that which God intended it should be, *the*